

A Blueprint for Occupant Protection

Occupant Protection grants provide highly effective programs, which reduce traffic fatalities and injuries by increasing the usage of seat belts, child safety seats and bicycle helmets. These grants provide traffic safety education, low-cost child safety seats, bilingual educational programs and materials, incentive items, and overtime funds to conduct child safety seat checkups and enforcement. A strong commitment requires help from the entire community including public agencies and the private sector to increase seat belt and child safety seat compliance and correct usage.

Purpose

This blueprint provides agencies with guidelines to develop and implement effective Occupant Protection Programs. A comprehensive Occupant Protection project or proposal should meet the needs of your local community and address statewide goals set by the Office of Traffic Safety.

Program Assessment

Assess your occupant protection activities by contrasting your current or planned activities with those in this Blueprint. Blueprint goals and objectives intend to provide you with measures to evaluate your department's current level of effectiveness. Some agencies find their level of activity exceeds those described in the objectives. Other agencies find deficiencies in their programs, which can be resolved through the suggested activities.

Economic and Hospitalization Costs

Use traffic fatality, injury, and property damage costs "to sell" traffic safety to your city's decision-makers. In 2001, CHP Statewide Integrated Traffic Reporting System (SWITRS) reported the following estimated provisional economic costs: Fatality - \$2,709,000; Injured Severely - \$188,000; Other Visible - \$38,000; Complaint of Pain - \$20,000; and Property Damage Only - \$2,000.

A 1995 NHTSA "*Safety Belt and Helmet Analyses*" study revealed three out of five unbelted motorists in fatal collisions would have survived had they buckled up. The study reported the average hospitalization cost was \$5,000 more for people who did not buckle up. Collision victims who wore seat belts had average inpatient hospital costs of \$9,004, compared with \$13,937 for people who failed to buckle up. The study also reported belted collision victims who didn't need hospital care had average medical costs of \$110, compared to \$562 for those who were unbelted.

Proposal Review Process

The OTS review process considers specific criteria including: potential traffic safety impact; collision statistics; seriousness of the identified problem(s); previous grant performance; and the recent number of OTS grants for funding consideration.

Summary

The following pages present a recommended problem identification process and list recommended goals and objectives. The “two step” problem identification process helps you identify your traffic safety problem(s). The goals and objectives provide qualitative and quantitative performance measures for a comprehensive Occupant Protection program. The sample goals and objectives listed in the BLUEPRINT provide successful programs from various agencies, including county health departments, universities, and local law enforcement. Successful Occupant Protection programs require a detailed problem identification analysis and a review of the goals and objectives contained in this Blueprint.

The blueprint assessment tools provide guidance for your program. Complete the problem identification process and consider the appropriate goals and objectives for a proposal or project. Agencies may choose goals and objectives not listed in the Blueprint.

BLUEPRINT comments are welcomed and appreciated. OTS plans to update and improve the BLUEPRINT to reflect the best practices and information for achieving successful Occupant Protection Programs. Please contact an OTS Regional Coordinator for questions or comments.

Problem Identification

First Step - Before you choose your goals and objectives, compare your collision data and child safety seat, seat belt, and bicycle helmet usage rates with statewide averages. The following 2001 CHP SWITRS provisional collision statistics provide a few examples of collision types you might use to compare your community to statewide averages.

- Seat belt use was indicated in 54.1 percent of killed vehicle occupants.
- Statewide seat belt usage rate (91.1 percent) - OTS Statewide Surveys (June 2002).
- Statewide child safety seat usage rate (85.6 percent) - OTS Statewide Surveys (June 2002).
- Estimated child safety seat misuse rate (87 percent).

OTS Collision Rankings provide you another resource for problem identification. OTS develops collision rankings for all counties and cities with a population greater than 25,000. OTS produces city and county rankings for the following: 1) total fatal and injury collisions, 2) alcohol involved collisions, 3) speed related collisions, 4) nighttime 9 p.m. - 3 a.m. collisions 5) hit-and-run collisions, 6) Had Been Drinking (HBD) Drivers <21, 7) HBD Drivers 21-34 8) pedestrian victims, 9) pedestrian victims age 65 and older, 10) pedestrian victims <15, 11) bicyclist victims, 12) bicyclist victims <15 and 13) DUI arrests (cities only).

Second Step - Once the disproportionate collision "types or categories" are identified i.e., bicycle involved etc., proceed to the next step. This critical part of the problem identification process involves reviewing actual collision reports to determine: who, what, where, when, and how. What factors contributed to the identified problems?

It is recommended that you conduct child safety seat use and seat belt use surveys to determine occupant restraint compliance rates for your city or county. It may also help if you reported the child seat misuse rate results of a recently conducted child safety seat checkup.

Once you complete the problem identification process, you are ready to develop goals and objectives to address the identified problems.

Performance Measures

Based on an analysis of statewide data, the Office of Traffic Safety calculated the following statewide Occupant Protection goals:

- To reduce the number of vehicle occupants killed and injured under the age of four 17.1 percent from the calendar year 1996 total 3,618 to 3,000 by December 31, 2002.
- To increase seat belt compliance 5.2 percentage points from the June 1996 compliance rate of 86.8 percent to 92.0 percent by December 31, 2002.
- To increase child safety seat compliance 5.4 percentage points from the June 1996 compliance rate of 85.6 percent to 91 percent by December 31, 2002.
- To reduce the number of unrestrained vehicle occupant fatalities as a percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities 8 percentage points from the calendar year 1996 rate of 54 percent to 46 percent by December 31, 2002.

Goals

Project Goals - Goals serve as the foundation upon which the project is built. Goals are what you hope to accomplish by implementing a traffic safety grant. The following are examples of Occupant Protection goals:

Occupant Protection Goals:

1. To reduce fatalities and injuries for vehicle occupants under age 4 by ___ % from the calendar 200_ base year total of ___ to ___ by ___, 200_.
2. To increase child safety seat usage by ___ percentage points from the calendar 200_ base year compliance rate of ___% to ___% by ___, 200_ (usage surveys will be conducted in March and September of each grant year).
3. To decrease the child safety seat "misuse" rate by ___ percentage points from the calendar 200_ base year rate of ___ % to ___% by ___, 200_ (misuse checkups will be conducted in March and September of each grant year).
4. To increase seat belt compliance by ___ percentage points from the calendar 200_ base year survey rate of ___% to ___% by ___, 200_ (usage surveys will be conducted in March and September of each grant year).
5. To increase occupant restraint use among youth fatalities (ages 15-20) by ___ percentage points from the calendar 200_ base year rate of ___% to ___% by ___, 200_.

Objectives

Project Objectives - Objectives are the tasks or activities undertaken during the project period to make the goal(s) a reality. Objectives move you closer to achieving your overall goal(s). Objectives measure a grantee's success.

Occupant Protection Objectives

Public Information and Education

1. To issue a press release announcing the kick-off of the project by ___, 200_. The press release will be forwarded to OTS Public Information Officer at pio@ots.ca.gov and the OTS Regional Coordinator for approval prior to the release. Printed newspaper copies of the press release will be faxed or e-mailed to OTS.
2. To use the following standard language in all press and media materials:
"Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety."

3. To e-mail to the OTS Public Information Officer at pio@ots.ca.gov and OTS Regional Coordinator at least one month in advance, a short description of any new traffic safety event or program.
4. To submit print clip articles **by 9 a.m.** to the OTS Public Information Officer by e-mail at pio@ots.ca.gov and OTS Regional Coordinator, or via fax at (916) 262-2960. Include publication name and date the article was published on all clips.
5. To e-mail all press releases or media advisories, alerts, and material to the OTS Public Information Officer at pio@ots.ca.gov and OTS Regional Coordinator for approval prior to their release.
6. To conduct a press conference or media event by insert date to kick-off or publicize the grant. OTS will be notified at least two week in advance of the grant kick-off event.
7. To use the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, California Energy, and Office of Traffic Safety logos in all press and media materials when feasible and practical.
8. To coordinate a "High School Seat Belt Challenge" at local area high schools by _____, 200__.

Description: This program is designed to increase seat belt use by creating an awareness campaign through good-natured competition. Unannounced seat belt use surveys will be conducted before, during and after the campaign as students enter the campus. Prizes can be awarded to school with the highest seat belt use rate and the school with the most improved seat belt use rate.

9. To successfully complete the four-day technician level Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training Program coordinated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by _____, 200__.
10. To implement a press conference or media event promoting the National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week in _____, 200__. Activity information will be provided in advance to the OTS Coordinator and to the OTS Public Information Officer.
11. To work closely with community based organizations to promote child safety use at both the neighborhood and community levels.
12. To include educational outreach relative to the consequences of leaving children unattended in or around vehicles in all child passenger safety brochures, press releases, PSAs, and speaking opportunities.
13. To present an award to people "saved by the child safety seat or seat belt." OTS will be notified of all cases that involve an OTS funded or child safety seat.

14. To initiate a “grocery bag essay” contest at _____ elementary schools.

Description: The first phase of the essay contest involves asking students to write in 25 words or less an occupant protection essay on grocery bags from a local grocery store. Essay winners receive prizes and the remaining non-winner grocery bags are returned to the store to package groceries.

15. To urge the media to report occupant restraint usage as a part of every collision.
16. To meet with local newspaper editorial boards to promote occupant protection articles.
17. To meet with traffic reporters and local business people to encourage the use occupant protection tag lines.
18. To develop a contest or program to encourage teachers to assign students to write letters to the newspaper editor, letters to parents, or essays on occupant protection. Winners will be eligible to receive prizes.
19. To utilize auto mall signs to promote occupant protection awareness and education.
20. To promote occupant restraint messages that focus on death, separation from family and loved ones, and the grief suffered by those left behind.
21. To publicize the statewide child safety seat “spotter” program that reports vehicles with unrestrained children.
22. To issue at least _____ media releases each quarter.
23. To develop localized promotional materials to be used as incentive items to encourage participation in radio contests, talk shows, educational presentations and contests. Some of the incentive and educational items could include key rings, bumper stickers, posters, badges, stickers, t-shirts, poster and essay contests, wristbands, pledges, books, press kits, and pamphlets.
24. To establish a highly publicized local child passenger safety hotline to answer questions regarding recalled child safety seats, correct usage, car seat availability, and other technical questions by _____, 200__.
25. To work with county child passenger safety specialists and county health departments to ensure fine monies are used for education and child safety seats (California law provides \$60 of every child safety seat fine to be placed in a special county fund for education and child safety seats).
26. To conduct a language assessment of the project’s service area to determine needs for materials in languages other than English by _____, 200__.

Enforcement

27. To issue seat belt citations equaling at least ____ % of total hazardous citations.
28. To stimulate increased occupant restraint citations, seat belt and child safety seat citations will be recorded administratively as “movers” or “hazardous citations.” In addition, an officer writing an occupant restraint violation and at least one additional moving violation will count as two “movers” on a single citation.
29. To record officer seat belt and child safety seat citation activity separately by _____, 200__.
30. To establish a written and enforced mandatory seat belt policy for law enforcement personnel with sanctions for noncompliance by _____, 200__.
31. To conduct ____ highly publicized seat belt enforcement saturation operations by _____, 200__.
32. To measure occupant restraint enforcement's impact on crime by tracking non-traffic related arrests. Some of the crime statistics to be recorded include: narcotic arrests, confiscated weapons, stole vehicles, criminal misdemeanor arrests, criminal felony arrests, and felony warrants arrests.
33. To add check boxes to the citation for seat belt and child safety seat violations by _____, 200__.
34. To conduct ____ occupant restraint roll call training presentations by _____, 200__.
35. To monitor the judicial disposition of child safety seat and seat belt citations. In addition, meet with judges to support the strict enforcement of traffic safety laws.
36. To develop the best strategies to encourage traffic commissioners, judges, traffic court referees, and others to enforce the safety seat and seat belt laws to implement child safety seat violator's schools (SB1073) by _____, 200__.
37. To conduct occupant restraint education and enforcement programs at ____ elementary schools and day care centers.

Description: The first step is to distribute occupant restraint education to parents, day care center and school officials. The education is followed by strict occupant restraint enforcement at the elementary schools and day care centers. Pre and post seat belt and child safety seat usage surveys will be conducted to determine program effectiveness.

38. To develop an Operational Plan to establish the method of operation and the policies applicable to carry out the grant program by _____, 200__.
39. To survey ____ local law enforcement agencies to determine their child safety seat and seat belt citation rates by _____, 200__.

Child Passenger Safety

40. To establish a child safety seat court diversion program by _____, 200__.
41. To conduct at least _____ highly publicized child safety seat checkups to promote correct usage at community events such as parks, shopping centers, car dealers, preschools, or open houses at police or fire departments.

Note: Car seat checkers need NHTSA Certified Child Passenger Safety training, proper forms for documentation, complete car seat instructions, resource materials, and on-site supervision by a NHTSA certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.

42. To properly fit ____ children in child safety seats at child safety seat checkups, court diversion classes, and instructional classes by _____, 200__.
43. To distribute at least ____ low/no cost child safety seats to people in need by _____, 200__.

Note: Child safety seat instruction/training, from a NHTSA Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician, will be included as an educational component of the program.

Education, Training, and Surveys

44. To conduct at least ____ educational traffic safety presentations impacting ____ students by _____, 200__. The presentations include seat belts, air bags, child safety seats, DUI, pedestrian and bicycle safety.
45. To train ____ local hospital medical staff on the proper use, installation, and instruction of conventional child safety seats and special needs child safety seats by _____, 200__.

Note: When attempting to establish the number of educational presentations to conduct each quarter, assess the pre-grant education activity in your local schools. Only list in your educational objective the additional presentations that the grant will enable you to conduct.

46. To conduct at least _____ traffic safety presentations impacting people ____ people in civic and community groups by _____, 200__. These presentations could also include exhibits at traffic safety fairs and other special events. Please note the total number of people impacted per event, for example, two events impacting 580 people.
47. To identify and profile the ____ largest culture groups, soliciting bilingual volunteers and loan program locations for each community by _____, 200__.

48. To train a minimum of ____ bilingual volunteer in occupant protection from each participating culture group by _____, 200__.
49. To identify and recruit approximately ____ teenagers to serve as peer leader/interns for the project in order to create a teen incentive training program by _____, 200__.
50. To conduct child passenger safety training classes for ____ hospital staff and ____ people at childbirth classes by _____, 200__.
51. To conduct worksite occupant protection education training focusing on seat belt policies and correct seat belt/child safety seat usage for ____ companies impacting ____ employees by _____, 200__.
52. To convene a task force to meet at least ____ times a year to explore innovative traffic management methods using community involvement to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries by increasing occupant usage.
53. To conduct seat belt usage surveys during the months of March and September of each grant year.
54. To conduct child safety seat usage surveys during the months of March and September of each grant year.
55. To conduct child safety seat "misuse" checkups during the months of March and September of each year.

Resources

NHTSA Publications (Free)

To receive NHTSA publications and other NHTSA materials please write, phone, fax, or e-mail your request to:

NHTSA
Traffic Safety Programs
Washington, DC 20590
Phone (202) 366-0910
Fax (202) 366-7149
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

- Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS)

California Highway Patrol
(916) 375-2850